
Christopher Shays

September 24, 2008

Statement of Congressman Christopher Shays

I believe a comprehensive approach to sex education that provides information about abstinence and contraceptives helps reduce unwanted pregnancy, abortion, and the contraction of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and AIDS.

As our kids are learning about their health, and how their behavior affects it, it's important they have all the facts. The extraordinary number of teen pregnancies and growing rate of STI transmission among teens underscores the necessity of comprehensive sexual education. They need to be taught about both abstinence and contraception.

Congress has spent more than \$1.5 billion on abstinence-only programs, which deny teenagers medically accurate, life-saving information about birth control and STIs. My home state of Connecticut is one of 17 states that reject Title V Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Funding, because Connecticut recognizes what many of us already know: abstinence-only programs do not work. The way to protect our children is not to restrict information vital to their health.

I am grateful to have partnered with Congresswoman Barbara Lee in introducing the Responsible Education About Life, or "REAL" Act, a bill that would authorize federal funds for states to offer comprehensive and medically accurate sex education in their schools. This legislation would provide funding for states to offer family life education, including education on abstinence and contraception, to prevent teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections.

People all over the country are demanding comprehensive sex education to keep our youth healthy and safe. That is why I support organizations like Planned Parenthood and other Title X family health providers. These organizations sponsor grassroots events all around the country to raise awareness about the need for comprehensive sex education and I applaud their good work.